



January 31, 2012

Dear County Executive Leggett and County Council Members,

The Water Quality Advisory Group (WQAG) has concerns regarding the Anacostia Watershed in Montgomery County and the impact of forest removal on the water quality in the watershed. In a related matter, the WQAG has come to understand that the State of Maryland has made commitments to protect and expand forested lands, and it appears that these commitments have not been met. **The WQAG recommends that Montgomery County formally recognize the State's unmet obligations regarding forest protection in the Anacostia River watershed in Montgomery County. Further, WQAG recommends that Montgomery County request that the State of Maryland provide resources and programs to meet these obligations.**

In 2001, the Governor of Maryland, the County Executives of Montgomery County and Prince George's County, and the Mayor of the District of Columbia together signed the [Anacostia Watershed Restoration Agreement](#). The Agreement committed the jurisdictions to restoration targets, including protecting and expanding forest cover in the Anacostia watershed, as both trees and tree canopy provide a critical role in preserving water quality.

Since then the decision by the State of Maryland to build the Intercounty Connector has resulted in an actual reduction of forest cover in the Anacostia Water shed located in Montgomery County, rather than the protection and expansion of forested lands that Maryland had pledged. Maryland State Highway Administration representatives report 458 acres of forest lost in the Anacostia Watershed (314 acres in Montgomery County), 332 acres of reforestation planned for the watershed (196 in Montgomery County), leaving a net deficit of 126 acres of forest for the watershed and 128 acres of forest for Montgomery County.

In light of these facts, the WQAG recommends that Montgomery County formally recognize the State of Maryland's significant unmet obligations regarding the Anacostia River watershed in Montgomery County. Further, WQAG recommends that Montgomery County request that the State of Maryland provide resources and programs to meet these obligations. These programs should include (a) a major tree planting program, (b) a major outreach program aimed at promoting wider public recognition of the Anacostia River in Maryland and the State's role in restoring it, (c) identification of lands that could be used for creation of a state park in the Anacostia River watershed, and (d) increases in tree canopy on State owned land in Montgomery County. In addition, the County should monitor the progress

WATER QUALITY ADVISORY GROUP

255 Rockville Pike, Suite 120 • Rockville, Maryland 20850 • 240-777-7700, FAX 240-777-7752



of the State's participation in a forested and non-forested tree canopy mapping project scheduled to begin in 2012.

Maryland's failure to live up to its public commitments is a setback both to Anacostia River restoration and the quality of life in the eastern part of Montgomery County. The County should be vocal about the need for the State of Maryland to live up to its obligations.

Thank you for your attention to our recommendation. Please do not hesitate to call on us if you have any questions related to this information.

Sincerely,

Daphne Pee
Chair

WATER QUALITY ADVISORY GROUP

255 Rockville Pike, Suite 120 • Rockville, Maryland 20850 • 240-777-7700, FAX 240-777-7752
